

Fleeting Light by TechnicolorTango

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Boys in love(we're getting there), Drinking, Hurt/Comfort, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, M/M, Slow Burn, Smoking, Swearing, i just wanted an excuse to write these two boys smoking together

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Jonathan Byers, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-12-09

Updated: 2018-01-14

Packaged: 2022-04-20 16:21:30

Rating: Mature

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 3

Words: 7,082

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Billy can't stop this feeling, like he's standing on a ticking time bomb, waiting for it to go off. He needs it loud, to drown out the burning threatening to spill out everywhere.

And he can't get Steve Harrington's pretty, beaten face out of his head.

1. The sun will one day grow cold

Author's Note:

Takes place sometime before the Snow Ball as far as time line is concerned. Im not 100 percent sure where these boys are taking me yet but this fic is going places, I'm just along for the ride. Enjoy it with me.

Billy hates this feeling. Like he's walking on eggshells, standing on top of a fuckin ticking time bomb, just waiting for it to go off. Everything has been quiet. Too quiet. He at least expected some sort of fallback by now. Fall back from the whole royal fuck up he had found himself in.

It had already been 2 weeks. Two goddamn weeks since he had smashed pretty fuckin King Steve's stupid fuckin teeth in. Since Billy had seen red like he had never seen it before. Lost all reason like he never had, given into the noise inside his head. He still gets a sick feeling in the pit of his stomach, when he thinks about the way his fist connected with king Steve's face, over and over, the crunch of cartilage underneath his knuckles. Harrington was most likely suffering from a concussion after that throwdown. Damn, Billy had probably broken the shits nose.

He had broken Steve's fuckin nose.

Billys hands were shaking as he brought his lighter up to the unlit cigarette dangling between his parted lips. After he lit it, he pulled in a long drag, closing his eyes, leaning against the door of his beat up Camaro, letting the smoke fill his lungs good before he blew it out. His hands were still shaking.

Dammit.

There was snow blanketing everything right now, and he hated it, because it muffled the sound, made everything even more quiet than it already was in this little hick town he was holed up in. Billy needed it to be loud, so fuckin loud he couldn't hear the cacophony

inside his own damn head. He needed to drown out these feelings that he didn't understand.

It had been fine, everything had been fine. He had been handling moving here, making a place for himself. Forcing himself into the swing of things. Yeah, that involved a lot of partying, fucking bitches, and getting high off his ass. Blasting music from his camaro as he sped down these damn empty back roads. He needed the noise like he needed oxygen to breathe. Needed to be wild, so he could contain the anger broiling inside, so it wouldn't rip out of his skin. Out of control.

Everyone had to know Billy Hargrove didn't take shit from anyone. Except...

Except then his head filled with the unwanted memory of hands slamming him roughly into the shelves, and that hard, mocking voice, demanding respect. Billy didn't want to admit to how that made him feel. Who had that even been? That scared little shit of a teenager, crying like a damn pansy, saying yes sir like a dog with a tail between its legs. That wasn't him. *That wasn't him.*

The real problem here was the damn quiet since the incident. Since Max had jammed a fuckin needle in his neck, and the world had spun on its axis, and a nail filled bat had almost taken off his balls. Thinking about it still made him angry, but at the same time he couldn't help the unbidden thought, Good for her. Good for Max for finally fuckin putting him in his place. God he had been awful to her. But he couldn't stop. He couldn't stop.

Neil..... Neil hadn't done anything since then. It had been two whole weeks of just.... Radio silence. Billy hadn't done what Neil wanted. He hadn't brought Max home, his car was fucked up, but Neil hadn't done anything.

Yet.

Billy growled, dropping the cigarette into the snow covered school parking lot, crunching it roughly under his boot heel. He stuffed his hands(the knuckles were still faintly yellow from bruising)into his coat pockets, hunching in his shoulders against the Winter air.

It was goddamn freezing in Hawkins.

And Billy was standing on a fuckin time bomb.

Steve's head hurt. Actually, to be fair, his whole damn face hurt. As he examined the aforementioned body part in the bathroom mirror, he couldn't help but grimace. Sure, the bruising had improved a lot in the last two weeks, but there was a sickly yellow around his eyes, and his nose was still swollen. At least it hadn't healed crooked.

Sighing, Steve opened up the medicine cabinet, rummaging around for the bottle of pain pills. As he popped the lid open, he rattled the bottle dismally, peering inside. The pills were almost gone. They had practically been his lifeline these last couple of weeks, the pain had been a real bitch.

He swallowed a couple down with a handful of tap water, then stumbled out of the bathroom, landing face first on his bed. Which hurt. Of course. Steve winced.

Things hadn't been... too great. As of late. Sure, he'd maybe sort of helped save the town of Hawkins from the horror of the Upside Down, but he didn't exactly feel it. He had royally fucked up his one damn job, protecting those kids from... Well, it had felt like pretty much *everything* that night. Demogorgons. Billy Hargrove. The Upside Down. those kids had been his responsibility. Where did that get him, except for beaten to a pulp and knocked out. Saved by the same kids he was supposed to be saving. Yeah.

"You're a regular goddamn hero Steve Harrington." He muttered sarcastically.

Recently, even when he tried his best, he kept replaying that horrible conversation. The one that had been the beginning of the end between him and Nancy. Wasted, at that damn party, Nancy and her ruined white dress. Steve couldn't stop hearing the words over and over again.

Bullshit. Bullshit. Bullshit.

Steve had been a fool. Foolishly in love with someone who could never truly be in love with him. He thought he had come to terms with it. Tried not to be bitter when he saw Jonathan and Nancy together. They were good for each other. Nancy deserved that. She deserved to be with someone she really loved. But Steve couldn't help it sometimes. He could feel his old self, the asshole he had been before Nancy, before the kids, before everything, trying to resurface. Vile words wanted to spill out of his mouth, directed at Nancy and her new boyfriend, words full of vitriol and hate. Words that didn't need to see the light of day. Steve would swallow them down, replace the grimace threatening to form with a plastered on smile. If Nancy noticed his smiles didn't really quite reach his eyes these days, well.... She never commented on it.

Steve knew he couldn't keep letting it get to him like this. He knew it wasn't healthy. But he just felt... aimless. Without purpose. There had been this idea in his mind, this vision of a perfect, three bedroom split level at the end of a cul de sac, with a perfect wife and a perfect family. After everything though, after the Upside Down, the whole almost dying thing on multiple occasions. Well, Nancy had been right.

It was all bullshit.

Steve didn't know what he wanted anymore. Most of the time he felt numb, empty. Kept pushing down his feelings so he couldn't feel. Otherwise he would feel too much.

Steve cut his thoughts off abruptly, sitting up, running his hands through his unkempt hair. Another thing he had let go recently. He slapped his hands determinedly on his thighs.

Okay. He needed to get himself together. He was picking up Dustin from school in less than thirty. Steve was playing D&D with the whole gang tonight. He had finally given into Dustins non stop requests to join the party. A request which, according to Dustin, was a great honor and privilege that should not be taken lightly. One way or another, Steve had found that D&D wasn't all that bad. Especially with the kids, it could actually be pretty fun.

He laughed a little to himself as he pocketed his keys. This was his

life now apparently, spending Friday nights with a bunch of thirteen year olds, playing nerd games.

Honestly, it could be worse.

Billy thought it must be some kind of sick joke when he saw Harringtons stupid fancy ride pull into the school parking lot. He had long ago abandoned standing out in the cold, freezing his ass off, and was currently back in the slightly less chilly Camaro, smoking what felt like his fifth cigarette. The cab was pretty well filled with smoke at this point.

Billy cracked open the door, airing out the smoke, watching Harrington preen his hair in his car mirror. The fucker didn't look too bad... all things considered.

Just seeing him again, in person, made Billy's blood boil in his veins, and he clenched his fists around the steering wheel, grinding his teeth together in frustration. Somehow, Billy had managed to avoid Harrington at school. Maybe the boy had taken the time off, to recover or something. Not that Billy had been looking for him.

Okay, fuck, so maybe he had been. On one hand he didn't want to see Harringtons stupid fucked up face at all, yet at the same time, inexplicably, Billy kept hoping he would. It was messed up. He was messed up. As messed up as Harringtons face.

Billy wasn't sure what he would do if he confronted Harrington. Part of him wanted to beat his face in all over again. That sick, burning part of him, constantly screaming for attention.

"Well, now's your chance Hargrove." He thought venomously as King Steve, fallen from grace, finally stepped out of his goddamn vehicle.

Billy rolled his cigarette aggressively between his lips in frustration, eyes roaming over Steve's lean frame. Clad in a black pea coat and worn jeans, he didn't look half as shit as he usually did when he was wearing those polos of his. His eyes fell on Steve's face again, and he drew in a sharp breath. Stupid fuckin pretty boy, still too goddamn pretty even with all that telltale faded bruising, like patchwork

around his eyes and cheekbones. Should have wrecked him up more, wrecked him so good there'd be scars all over that damn face of his, scars that would make him think of Billy every time he looked in the mirror.

Fuck. He needed to stop thinking like that. Making a decision he was sure he would regret, Billy slid out of his car, slamming the door behind him more aggressively than he had meant to. His boots left deep tracks in the snow as he made his way over to where Harrington still stood next to his vehicle, distractedly pulling on a pair of gloves he had procured from his pocket.

Billy sidled up right next to Harrington, getting into his peripheral vision. He felt a thrill run down his spine at the way Steve stiffened when he finally noticed Billy standing there. He faltered in putting on his left glove, audibly swallowing, tongue flicking out nervously over his lips, which Billy's eyes had wandered to inadvertently.

"You look like shit." Billy opened with.

Steve turned to him fully at that, eyes sparking, "Oh, and who's fault is that?" He bit out.

Billy let a smile blossom across his face, nodding, "Oh, definitely mine Stevey."

Steve growled, fists clenching at his sides. He looked ready to throw a punch for a split second there, and Billy felt his heart start racing, felt his body naturally bracing itself for a fight. Then Steve swallowed, unclenching his fists, licking his damn lips again(would he *stop doing that*).

"Alright glad we've yet again confirmed the fact that you're a grade A asshole Hargrove. Now will you stop badgering me?"

He finished pulling on his glove, turning his back to Billy, seemingly set on ending the conversation and heading into the school.

Billy did his best to not let it phase him. He leaned casually against Steve's car, pulling out his pack of cigarettes. He waved them aimlessly at Harringtons retreating form, "Wanna smoke?" He asked,

innocently.

Steve froze, tension obvious in his shoulders, "I'm picking up Dustin." The words were terse.

Billy chuckled, "Come ooon, pretty boy, school won't get out for another 15. One smoke won't hurt?"

At first, Billy thought for sure Steve was going to spit out a fuck you and hightail it the hell away, the way he was still standing there, frozen. He figured if he could see Steve's face right now, he'd probably look like a deer in the headlights or some shit. Billy didn't know why he was so intent on getting Harrington to have a smoke with him all of a sudden, like they were fuckin *buddies*. He still felt that anger, deep down, like a caged and wild animal, and hell yeah it wanted to pummel this boy in front of him. But there was something else there too. Something about the way Billy's mind kept referring to Steve as pretty boy on repeat (and meaning it) (he didn't want to think about that).

Then Steve turned around. And he just looked fuckin beat, and tired. You could see it in his eyes. All the irritation was gone, just like that, they were dead empty, and Billy didn't like that nearly as much as the fire he had seen in them before.

Steve reached out a hand reluctantly, plucking a smoke from the pack, leaning against the car, pretty damn far from Billy though, he noted mirthfully. For a second Steve fumbled in his pockets, but they came up empty, and he scrunched his nose down at the unlit cigarette in his mouth.

Billy chuckled, procuring his own lighter, he flicked it on, beckoning Steve closer with a nod of his head. He was surprised when Steve leaned forward without hesitation, closing the gap between them. Billy felt something tight in his stomach at the proximity, and the warmth of Steve's breath on his hands as he brought the lighter close. Steve's eyes flickered up and met Billy's, while he was lighting the damn cigarette, and he almost faltered for a minute there, but he kept his gaze locked with Steve's. Challenging him with his eyes, he briefly glanced at Steve's mouth and back again. His mind kept repeating the same thing. Over and over. Stupid fuckin pretty boy.

Steve backed away then, the cigarette between those damn distracting lips of his now lit, and he settled himself back again, taking in a drag, then blowing it out into the frosty air. Billy watched him for another minute, and then shrugged, pocketing the lighter and taking another drag from his own smoke.

They stayed like that, in silence, freezing their asses off, until the school bell rang, breaking the silence and making Billy jump a little.

Steve pulled himself off the car, dropping the smoke and crushing it into the snow, he rubbed his hands together against the cold.

“Thanks for the smoke, I guess.” He said, not looking at Billy once, and then he was gone.

Billy blinked a few times, watching as swarms of kids spilled out of the opening school doors. Max should be among them at some point. That was the whole damn reason he was here.

He abruptly shook himself out of the stupor the cold had put him in and made his way back to his car, revving the engine and turning up the music to a suitable din.

It wasn't until Max was sitting in the passenger seat, per usual shooting him glares and giving him the silent treatment, that he realized it. The quiet. That goddamn quiet that had been eating him alive, till he was sure he would have to rip off his own skin. It hadn't bothered him once while he and King Steve were standing there like fools in the cold, smoking together.

He peeled out of the parking lot, turning up the volume of the stereo even louder.

What did that even fuckin *mean*.

2. Light will slowly fade away

Notes for the Chapter:

I may or may not be heavily inspired by listening to some atmospheric tunes while writing these chapters.

[Give my playlist a listen.](#)

The alcohol burned as it slid down Billy's throat, and he relished in it. This shit was strong, which was exactly what he needed right now. Getting hard stuff like this was an absolute score, made coming to the bonfire worth it tonight. He stood close to the crackling flames, his face and hands burning from the overwhelming heat. His back was cold as ice though. The leather jacket wasn't exactly the best choice for the winter weather. Billy didn't particularly care.

He had a good buzz going, and was suitably high from a blunt he had shared with some random broad earlier. There were a lot of teens from out of town at this shin dig. Some college kids too. That wasn't a bad thing. Billy was getting fuckin tired of seeing the same old Hawkins faces. Maybe he'd score with a college bitch tonight.

Billy was trying to ignore the memory of warm breath on his fingers and a lit cigarette, of brown eyes locked on his. He shuddered and took another long drink, then glared at the empty bottom of the plastic cup in his hands. Blowing out a frustrated breath, he reluctantly left the warmth of the fire and wandered over to where the guy he had snagged the booze from before was, filling up waiting cups from bottles lined on the back of his beat up pickup truck.

Billy shoved his way to the front of the small crowd gathered, shooting down protests with a pointed glare. He smiled charmingly at the guy providing the alcohol, leaning in close and shoving his cup forward.

"More of the same." He slurred out.

The guy raised an eyebrow, but chose not to comment, pouring liquor in Billy's cup with a shrug. Billy took a swallow gratefully, lingering close to the truck for awhile. Metallica was blaring from the

cab, and he closed his eyes, swaying to the wild bass rhythm.

He breathed out. Fuck yeah. Moments like this were exactly what he lived for. Letting everything go, drowning in the music, the alcohol. A large group was dancing closer to the fire, and Billy finished off his cup, crumpling and tossing it, he threw himself into the mess of thrashing bodies, undulating with the pressed in crowd, letting out a whoop.

A pair of hands tugged on his belt loops, and Billy found himself face to face with a girl, a bit older than him most likely, slightly taller. She wasn't too bad to look at, long black hair reaching her waist, good curves, excellent bust. Her pupils were blown wide and she was fucking him with lascivious bedroom eyes. Billy could definitely roll with this. He wrapped his hands around her waist and leaned in, mouthing at her neck.

Everything was too much and not enough at the same time. He was fuckin sky high and at the bottom of the sea. Could breathe in all the goddamn oxygen in the universe, and was drowning, choking, all the air gone from his lungs.

The girl was whispering something into his ear. He tried to focus in on the words over the rushing in his eardrums.

“Let’s go to your car.”

Then she was kissing him and her mouth tasted like a familiar brand of cigarettes and her lips were just this side of too soft and her breasts pressing against his chest weren't- He jerked away abruptly, and she looked at him, surprised.

Her lips were forming words at him.

Liar.

Billy blinked, shaking his head, but the world was tilting and the words pounded in his skull over and over again.

Liar. Liar. Liar.

(It didn't sound like her voice saying them.)

Suddenly he couldn't fuckin stand it. Billy cursed, stumbling out of the crowd, ignoring the girl's eyes full of clouded confusion as she watched him leave. He tried to reorient himself around everything spinning. Shit. *Shit*. How much had he drunk? He couldn't remember right now. Which was probably a bad thing. Or maybe it was a good thing. Billy was trying to forget something but he couldn't remember what it was he was trying to forget.

So stop fuckin thinking about it, moron!

With the way everyone looked at him, he might have shouted those words out loud and not just in his head. Dammit.

Billy fumbled for his keys in his pocket, trying to remember where he had parked the Camaro. There were way too many fuckin cars out here. Finally he found her, sandwiched in between two SUVs. He shook slightly as he wrenched the door open, falling into the driver's seat and staring blankly up at the ceiling for a couple seconds. Minutes. Or for an eternity. He wasn't sure.

By the time he had the damn sense to actually turn on the car his fingers were so numb it took him at least ten tries to get the stupid goddamn keys in the goddamn ignition.

"Fuck." Billy muttered, leaning his forehead against the cold steering wheel, listening to the thrum of the engine.

He felt sick to his stomach. He didn't want to be at this goddamn party anymore, but he sure as fuck wasn't going back to that shithole of a "home." Being at that damn house was dangerous, Billy knew he had to put off going there for as long as he could.

Now it was getting too quiet again.

There had to be someplace he could be where the quiet wouldn't rip him apart.

There had to be.

Steve shook the die between his hands, apprehension building as he

tossed it. Watching the die roll, he held his breath as it finally came to a precarious stop at the edge of the table. Where it landed. On 1. Again. Steve let out a groan of frustration. At the sight, Dustin, who was sitting to Steve's right, broke into a fit of laughter.

"Holy shit Steve, that's the third tonight. You're on a roll man." The kid choked out, holding his sides. "Get it, *on a roll*." He waggled his eyebrows.

The rest of the group groaned collectively. Mike, the DM for this campaign, smiled apologetically from across the table at Steve.

"Luck just isn't on your side man." Lucas commented, clapping Steve on the back.

When is it ever? Steve thought to himself. On the plus side, his screw up wouldn't affect the rest of the party, this time. Dustin, Lucas, and Will had already made it safe and sound, across the rickety bridge, dangling thousands of feet above a seemingly endless abyss. Alas, Steve's poor Cleric(HP already suffering due to an unfortunate incident with poisonous fish earlier)was not going to be so lucky.

The rest of the evening proved to be much the same, the game ending with Steve's character dying a not so heroic death before the team even made it to the final battle. Dustin thought the whole thing was hilarious, of course. God, Steve loved the kid, but at times he also felt the intense desire to clock him on the side of the head. Particularly at this moment, on the drive back to Dustins house, as the boy recounted for the umpteenth time the highlight of the night, when Steve, having rolled his second 1 of the game, had gotten his character cursed with a spell that morphed him into a sheep. Then almost eaten.

(Okay. So maybe that had been kind of funny. A little bit. If you squinted.)

Steve chuckled, "Yes Dustin, thanks, I get the picture. I was there, remember. This was only about, what, two hours ago?"

"You wound me Steve." Dustin declared dramatically, laying his hand over his heart. "My telling of the story must be perfected. It's a tale to

pass down through the ages. Why, when I'm recounting it to my great, great grandchildren....”

Steve let his thoughts trail off as Dustin continued, absentmindedly running his tongue across his lips. He swore he could still taste the smoke from earlier that day, when he had taken up *Billy Hargrove*, of all people, on the offer of a cigarette.

Steve had been angry at first, sure. Hargrove was the reason for his throbbing head and messed up face these last couple of weeks, and when Billy had approached him in the parking lot, a whole whirlwind of emotions had risen to the surface. Apprehension, irritation. Hargrove had been an ass, as expected. But then he hadn't been as much of one... and hadn't that been confusing?

Steve had been ready to refuse the offer of the smoke, when abruptly that roiling of emotions in him had just... died out. He was left with a bone weary exhaustion, along with the realization that he had faced far more frightening things that awful night than Billy Hargrove. Even if it had seemed like Billy was bent on killing him, when he was pounding Steve into the floor.

Steve wondered if Billy offering him the cigarette was some veiled form of an apology, but had quickly dismissed that idea as soon as it came. He highly doubted someone as prideful as Hargrove would be giving any sort of apology.

Then again, there had been.... Something there. While they were standing together. Compared to everything he had gone through recently, sharing an oddly comfortable, almost *companionable*, silence with Billy was not the strangest thing that could happen.

Steve wasn't sure how to get a read on Hargrove to be honest. He had been a constant thorn in Steve's side ever since he had arrived in Hawkins. There was this... tension between them Steve couldn't quite put a finger on. It wasn't really all that surprising it had ended up with fists flying like it had.

It was just wierder that it *hadn't* really ended there, wasn't it? Billy still seemed focused on him, for some crazy reason. Steve didn't know why it was taking over his thoughts like this. All it had been was an

innocent enough smoke.

With the guy who'd broken his nose.

"Steve, stop!"

Dustin's shout broke through his train of thought, and Steve started, slamming on the breaks, looking over at Dustin in surprise.

"You were about to pass my house."

Sure enough, Steve's car had come to a screeching halt directly in front of the boys' home.

"Damn, sorry, I was.... Not paying attention." He admitted, smiling sheepishly.

Dustin waved it off, opening up the passenger door, "It's all good man, I noticed." He jumped out and then hesitated, turning back around, hopping from foot to foot. "So, um..."

"Yees?" Steve goaded, raising an eyebrow.

"The Snow Ball is in about a week." The teen stopped again.

Steve couldn't help himself, he raised a hand to his mouth, feigning surprise, "Are you asking me to the dance, Dustin!? I'm flattered!"

Dustin guffawed, reaching back in and shoving Steve playfully, "No you jerk, come on! I was wondering... if... If you'd show me how to do my hair like yours."

Steve broke off his laughter, ruffling the kid on the head, "Of course I will man. You know you'll knock all the ladies dead with a do like mine."

Dustin smiled big, "That's the plan. Thanks Steve."

"No problem."

As Steve drove off in the direction of his home, he tried to hold on to the feeling that today had been *good* for once. D&D had been a lot of

fun, even if his rolls were shit. Spending time with the kids was always a great time. It was the one thing Steve was sure of, right now, when everything else seemed so unsure. He didn't want to keep going back to that same familiar pathway in his brain, back to feeling lost, stuck without focus or direction.

Steve sighed. Rounding the corner onto his street, the sight of his familiar looming (empty, always fuckin empty) house came into view. And then he almost slammed the brakes down in surprise for the second time tonight. Managing to catch himself, he slowed down to a crawl instead, swearing softly under his breath.

Billy Hargroves Camaro was parked in his driveway.

3. The noise in time will be still

Notes for the Chapter:

So this is late in coming, oops. Kind of got caught up in the holidays and new years. Hopefully updates will be more regular from this point on. Thanks for being patient with me.

Steve found Hargrove leaning up against the front door of his house. Billy's hair was damp, frosty with ice. His teeth were chattering so loud Steve could hear them even from the bottom of the porch stairs, where he now stood, staring up at Billy uncomfortably.

The teen finally noticed him, his blue eyes locking onto Steve, he grinned lopsidedly, pushing away from the door. "Theeeres the man of the hooour." He slurred out, chuckling. After an obviously unsuccessful attempt to move toward Steve, he gave up, falling back against the door.

Steve glanced incredulously at the Camaro behind him, "Jesus Christ Hargrove, did you *drive* here?!"

Billy was obviously wasted out of his damn mind. He pouted at Steve from underneath frosty curls, "Not my mooom Stevey."

Steve shook his head, approaching the door, pulling out his keys, "Move, I need to unlock my front door you moron."

Hargrove once again made a heroic attempt to get out of the way, but he promptly stumbled, and Steve unconsciously reached out to stabilize him, grabbing Billy's shoulders. In the process he also dropped the house keys. Steve cursed.

Hargrove apparently thought the whole ordeal absolutely hilarious, he leaned heavily into Steve's chest, cackling. Steve could really smell the alcohol this up close and personal. He wrinkled his nose. For fucks sake, it was a miracle Billy had made it here without wrapping his damn car around a tree.

“Okay, okay. I need to get my keys you drunk.” Steve protested, manhandling Billy back against the door. Damn, he was heavy.

Keys procured once again, Steve pulled Billy away from the door, urging him to wrap an arm around his shoulders so he wouldn't fall flat on his face. Billy did so, and the two were soon inside Steve's home. Awkwardly closing the door behind him with one hand, Steve stopped, suddenly filled with uncertainty. What the *hell* was he even doing right now?

Steve looked over at Hargoves face, trying to get a read on what the hell Billy was even thinking. Not much, probably. His pupils were blown, so he was most likely high on top of the alcohol. Which was just lovely. Steve could barely handle Billy sober, let alone drunk and high. But he flinched at the sight of Billy's blue tinged lips, noticing once again that the guy was obviously freezing. He definitely couldn't kick Hargrove back out into the cold, not like this.

Sighing, Steve reluctantly made his way to the living room, depositing Billy unceremoniously on the couch when they finally reached it. Hargrove had been uncharacteristically quiet this whole time, which was unnerving.

Steve collapsed next to Billy, side eyeing him. The idiot was still visibly shivering. Steve ran a hand through his hair, biting his bottom lip and leaning forward in frustration, rocking on his heels.

“Okay. So. Um. You should probably take a minute to sober up, then take a hot shower. You need to get yourself warmed up man.”

Billy finally acknowledged the words, rolling his head over to look at Steve. Pointedly starting at his feet, he slowly raked his eyes all the way up Steve's body. Coming to a stop at his face, he leaned in unsteadily, smirking, “Oh. Be honest pretty boy, I knoooow you jus wanna get me naked.”

Steve felt his face flush clear to his ears. He stuttered, trying to formulate a response. Was Billy Hargrove *flirting* with him!?

He stood up abruptly, glaring down at Billy, “Stay there you pervert. I'm getting you a glass of water.”

Steve made his way to the kitchen, turning on the faucet and splashing some of the water into his face. Unlike Billy, who was too goddamn cold, Steve was a bit too hot right now. Jesus, he needed to get a grip. Hargrove always managed to rile him up one way or another. Which was probably exactly what the bastard wanted.

He grumbled his way back into the living room, glass of water in hand, only to let out a squawk of surprise and almost drop the damn glass. Hargrove was currently in the process of stripping off his clothes. Right in the middle of Steve's goddamn living room.

“What the hell Hargrove!?” Steve shouted, watching uncertainly as Billy tripped onto the floor in an attempt to remove his jeans.

Billy looked up at him dazedly from where he now lay, furrowing his eyebrows and putting on a face that was close to a pout (Steve was loathe to admit it was kind of cute? Or it would be, on any other face aside from Hargrove's, anyway).

“You said I should take a shower.”

“The shower isn't in the damn living room you moron.” Steve muttered, finally resigning himself and squatting next to Billy to hand him the glass of water. “Just... Drink this first.”

Billy managed to grab the water and get it down at least, even with his jeans around his ankles. Steve tried his best to look anywhere but at Hargrove lying pretty much naked on his floor. He had seen this guy in the showers at school plenty of times before, so why was he so damn self conscious about it now!?

Steve shook his head, trying to stop himself from overthinking it. Things had been overwhelming enough lately. He took the now empty glass from Billy's hand, watching as Billy then proceeded to kick off his pants the rest of the way, smirking triumphantly up at Steve.

Steve snorted out a laugh despite himself. “Alright, alright, I'll help you to the shower okay? But once you've sobered up, you're leaving, got that Hargrove?” He said, holding up his hands in surrender.

Billy didn't reply, but Steve figured that was enough acquiescence to loop both arms underneath his shoulders and heft him back to standing. They made their way unsteadily to Steve's bathroom, and Steve let out a sigh of relief when he was finally able to rest Hargrove against the bathroom door.

"I'm gonna assume you can figure out the shower yourself." Billy did seem to be a bit sobered up now. His eyes, at least, were more focused, where they were currently trained on Steve's face. Steve swallowed, averting his gaze and backing out of the bathroom.

"Just don't... fall and crack your skull or something." He mumbled.

Billy let out an amused huff, "Didn't know you cared, princess."

Steve felt his hackles raise at the princess bit, but forced himself to let it go, turning away with what he hoped indicated to Hargrove that he was done with this weird back and forth for now. Billy seemed to get the message, the door shutting behind Steve with a click.

The hot water felt good running down Billy's head, into his face, washing away the stink of alcohol and sweat, filling his ears with the reassuring rush and noise. He braced himself against the wall with one hand, shaking his head and trying to get coherent thoughts back into his goddamn brain. He noticed absently that even under the burning hot spray his hands were still shaking. Honestly it stung like a bitch but he relished the feeling.

What the fuck had he been thinking, driving to goddamn Steve Harringtons house, of all places!?

He growled, pounding his fist into the wall. Here he was, making a fuckin fool of himself in front of Steve. It was disgusting. Billy felt the urge to march out there and pound the fuckin memory of any of this shit ever happening out of Steve's mind. Shit. He really needed to get ahold of himself.

Getting his temper under control was something Billy had never been good at. But he was trying, wasn't he!? He couldn't go and fuck it up

now.

What had he even expected to happen, coming here? There was something that Billy wanted from this, but he couldn't begin to figure it out. Apparently, high as a kite, fucked out of his mind, it had made all the sense in the world. Right now though, now that he was more sober, he... Still wanted to be here, didn't he? More than anywhere. And wasn't that just messed up? Billy hated it.

After what seemed like an eternity but still not long enough, Billy turned off the shower, stepping out and snagging a towel from a neatly folded pile in the corner. He tried to take as long as possible drying himself off, not wanting to go out there and confront Harrington again. Billy still wasn't sure exactly what he would do, once he saw Steve, now that he could actually think. Something inside of him was screaming, clawing to be let out. He kept pushing it down down down, but how long could he keep that shit up?

Fuck, he wished he was still high.

Wrapping the towel around his waist and squaring his shoulders, Billy pushed the door open. Harrington, who was currently sitting on the edge of the bed, jolted as Billy entered his room, looking at Billy and then looking away just as quickly.

"I hung your clothes over the heater downstairs, they were pretty soaked...." He trailed off, as if expecting Billy to say something in response.

"My goddamn hero." Billy bit out sarcastically, feeling a certain sense of satisfaction in the brief glare Harrington sent his way.

"Feel free to show yourself out asshole."

Billy didn't like the way his stomach dropped at the idea of leaving. He shuffled from foot to foot, trying to fight the urge to stay right damn there. Steve looked at him again, and something in his expression changed.

"Or you can stay. Whatever." Harrington looked just as surprised as Billy at the words that came out of his mouth. It wasn't just surprise

Billy felt though. The pit that had wound itself tightly in his stomach seemed to unwind just a little and he felt like he could breathe easier again.

Billy cracked a smile, moving with purpose and dropping next to Steve on the bed, "Can't get enough of me, huh Harrington?"

Steve shuffled away so there was more space between them, raising his eyebrows, "Yeah. You're a *real* charmer Hargrove."

There were all sorts of things, just on the tip of his tongue, Billy wanted to say to that. I want to punch your perfect face all over again Harrington. Want to wrap my hands around your throat until you can't fuckin breathe. Push you down, make you breathless, make you scream. Let me show you how much of a charmer I can be. Let me-

Billy blinked, cutting off those thoughts abruptly, digging his nails into his palms. Fuck. He couldn't breathe again.

"You okay man?" Steve's question cut through the haze.

"I'm never fuckin okay Harrington." The words came out unbidden, laced with too much truth, tasting bitter in his mouth. Why had he fuckin said that? Shit, maybe he wasn't as sober as he had thought.

Billy could feel the uncomfortable shift in the air, watched tensely as Harrington opened his mouth and then closed it again. Finally Steve leaned forward, reaching for his nightstand drawer and sliding it open. After a bit of searching, he pulled out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter, tapping one out, offering it to Billy in silence.

Billy heaved out a sigh, taking the smoke and twirling it absentmindedly between his fingers. Steve procured one of his own, and Billy felt a moment of irritation as the shit lit his own cigarette first, putting it to his mouth. Without warning Steve was suddenly *there*, leaning into Billy's space, and Billy froze a bit, pulse picking up pace, uncertain.

"What are you up to, Harrington?" He asked, wishing he could stop the stupid goddamn shake in his voice.

Steve removed his cigarette from his lips for a moment, meeting Billy's eyes, "Just returning the favor." He placed the smoke back in his mouth, looking at Billy expectantly.

Fine, if the little shit wanted to play this game, Billy sure as hell wasn't one to back down from a challenge. He put his own unlit cigarette into his mouth, and in a split second decision of madness, reached lightning fast behind Harringtons head. Billy had to give credit to Steve for not even flinching as he wrapped his fingers in Steve's hair, pushing the pretty bastards face forward until their cigarettes connected, holding him there for what Billy didn't want to admit was probably longer than necessary.

When he finally pulled away, Billy took a long drag from the now lit smoke, letting it out in a trembling breath. Steve was quiet for awhile. Billy couldn't help the way his eyes kept drawing to Harrington, hyper focused on the way Steves lips pursed around his cigarette each time he took a drag.

Steve's gaze flickered over to Billy, "You wanna talk about it? The never being okay thing?"

"No."

"Okay."

Another beat of silence. Billy clenched his free hand into the covers beneath it. Jesus, his palms were sweaty.

"I just...." He took in another inhale of his cigarette, aggressively tapping his foot against the floor, "I just don't wanna go home tonight." The last words almost caught in his damn throat, coming out in a choked whisper. Billy hunched in on himself, embarrassed at this display of vulnerability. Why was he acting like such a fuckin pussy in front of goddamn fuckin Harrington?

Steve nodded slowly, watching Billy's face intently, as if searching to find something, "You can crash on the couch downstairs, if you want."

God *dammit*. Billy stood up abruptly. He needed distance, space.

Needed to get downstairs to that couch before he made even more of a fool of himself. Leave it to Harrington to act like some goddamn knight in shining armor, too goddamn honorable to just kick Billy back out into the freezing night where he fuckin belonged. God, it made Billy sick. Billy stopped just in the doorway, hesitating to leave, even though he wasn't sure why. A part of him, deep down, kept insisting this wasn't *enough*, that he needed more. But more of what, dammit!?

Finally, Billy forced himself to keep going, leaving goddamn confusing Harrington still sitting there, smoking and watching Billy go with an unreadable expression on his stupid (pretty) face.